

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Admiral Inman

DDCI Address to Employees

March 17, 1981

ADMIRAL BOBBY INMAN: Since you have had the misfortune of seeing so much of me in the press over the last two months I decided it might be well that you at least see a little in person before we get very much further down this road.

I guess the first thing I ought to say is I was reluctant to come. I was reluctant to come because I had the sense that, for personal career satisfaction and for obligation to my family and from feeling the same impact that a lot of you do of four years of pay caps and a five percent raise, that I ought to take advantage of some what were to me surprisingly attractive offers. I learned new dimensions in arm-twisting.

[Laughter]

ADMIRAL INMAN: I am here to join you, and I consider that a great privilege.

You and I both know that there can only be one Director of Central Intelligence. And all the rest of us are here to try to help him do an extraordinarily demanding job. The degree to which we all understand one another and work toward a common purpose in that, we're more likely to be effective.

Why do I have these sessions? Standard in my last six years, seven years, I've tried about once every three months to get together for upwards of an hour with a mix of senior people and some not so senior, to give them my view of ongoing events or things that are troubling me, and to draw out of them questions about what's foremost on their mind. Those have usually turned out to be educational. There have been a few occasions when it would have been nice to have had a subsequent record that said "What the Admiral meant to say was."

So, first rule: If after one of these sessions there is some confusion about what it was I meant, what I intended, ask Don't let it fester.

I believe that families are happiest when there is great candor in them. And I consider this a family of which I'm now privileged to be a member.

In the last 45 months, in doing an awful lot of these in very candid form I've considered myself fortunate that I have never read the results of some fairly flippant and sometimes, perhaps, cogent observations in the media. I've elected not to worry about that prospect in coming together here, because I've learned you can speak to very small sessions and still have the results in the media. And one should therefore begin this process with not worrying about how a very few people might elect

to misuse the information, but to keep in focus that communication is probably the most important thing we do day-by-day with one another and with the outside world.

So you will get candor in my responses. And I hope they do not offend. That's the last thing that I intend.

In getting my thoughts together for this session I was somewhat distressed that there was a clear nervousness by some people about what I might have to say, suggestions that perhaps some parts of it or approaches the DCLA ought to ask me not to say. In our good relationships, fortunately, that does not prove to be a factor. But it does say to me that anyone who would begin with a worry about what I might say to this gathering doesn't really know me very well.

I pride myself that all my life I have been a builder, not a destroyer. I have very little patience with bureaucratic warfare. I find it wears me down very quickly, my irritation level goes up very high. But I have a great deal of tolerance for mistakes. I've made a lot of them over the years. And the speed with which those mistakes are identified, or the speed with which problems are identified, says that we can collectively put our energy into problem-solving.

There, I think I have had some measure of success. And I would hope to add more in these years we share together.

I do have some peculiarities that may go with admirals in some excess to others. I have a great fondness for very timely responses. I like to answer the mail quickly. And you will find now and again I will get restless if suspenses keep getting extended, and you may think I'm spending too much of my time on the bureaucratic side in that case. But I'm persuaded that an agency's overall reputation for being swift but sure in their responses goes a long way in conveying a feeling of professionalism and competence in the ranks.

I have a particular peculiarity on the use of the word feel, as opposed to believe. And you'll know any of us who were students of Admiral Arleigh Burke at one stage of our young lives all learned to be very chary of that. And, therefore, you feel with your hands and you believe when you're expressing your position. And I hope, throughout my tenure, that we can collectively say that's the only area in which I have ever tried to influence your analytical judgments.

I don't believe in witch hunts. Usually when mistakes occur, there's plenty of blame to share in all directions. The hallmark of professionalism, to me, is the speed with which you move to learn the lessons, and hope not to repeat them. If they're repeated too often, then, clearly, one needs to find accountability

and try to deal with them.

Perceptions that I bring to this problem to this position. I believe we need to redouble our efforts to sell CIA to those inside CIA. From time to time, I get some indication of a rare, occasional siege mentality.

I would tell you that, as I will be trying to persuade the Director, I bring a basic approach to the problem that time spent trying to sell ourselves outside is, in most cases not very productive; but that we really do need to work on selling particularly the new generation, on the excitement that many of us have found by being in this intelligence business, of the urgent need for the best professionalism we can develop and on trying to reach out and find ways that make both the families feel a part and that makes those who've retired feel a part.

You may do far better at that than I realize at the outside -- from the outside. But I will be spending a lot of time asking questions in that regard, because I'm persuaded that there is a high payoff in time you spend on ceremonies, promotions, a whole range of personal events that convince the people of the agency that you really do care about them and that there is a great deal of personal warmth involved.

We ought to set as our goal that we'll be judged by performance, not by who we know, not by the pounds or anything else along the way.

How is that performance today? And again, you all recognize -- and it's one of the reasons I wanted to do this early before I had any of the handicaps of being exposed from the inside to what you really do.

From the outside, I would give a slightly mixed report card on the performance. I have a perception, again -- and I have watched in these few weeks that I have been trying my version of flexible time -- that there is a -- that there is a mix of quality. I've seen some of the very best analysis, some of the most cogent discussion of issues that I've ever been privileged to see. And I've seen some other that I would rank as better than pedestrian, but not very sharp or clear. I've listened to some exposition of problems that I could instantly grasp and understand. And I've had a couple of other occasions where I really was left troubled, what was fact and what was opinion or judgment.

I believe we should put the highest priority on the quality of our output, on trying to be as precise as we can, on rewarding those who are willing to take personal risks in their own judgments; and if they're wrong, accepting that if you're going to get out there and make some hard projections or esti-

mates, you are on occasion going to be wrong.

Fundamentally I would hope that I can help all of you, and that you will work with me in the process of putting building professionalism at the top of our ladder.

Mr. Casey and I both may seek some outside assistance or advice in this process as we go along. But I'm persuaded that, in this enormous array of talent, there are bound to be better ideas on things that we can do to improve the professionalism and to improve the climate than we are likely to find from those who know far less about the agency.

I do not bring to this job a persuasion that one ought to race out to start reorganizing. We are doing some reorganizing with regard to the intelligence-community portions of the DCI's responsibilities, simply to clarify the lines, to reduce to some degree the manpower involvement in order to free up additional manpower for the line organizations to go into more productive work.

We will also be striving, in that to insure that the DCI gets the broadest possible advice on decisions that he has to make, particularly on decisions that impact on more than just CIA itself.

We've had a few miscues in that process. We'll probably have more. We dragooned Bob Gates back into an assignment to help us in pulling together a more coherent organization for the DCI/DDCI staffs.

We will slowly approach where other changes need to be made, how one approaches problems to try to improve them. I bring a strong persuasion to this job that we are sharply undermanned, as a result of 10 years of drawdown, to do the job that's before us; and that very high on the priority list has to be justifying the needs, prioritizing them, and then getting the Administration and Congress to support them. Even while some other issues have been fumbled a little, we have had some early progress in some 82 add-ons that will be trickling down to you. And they clearly are only a beginning.

There are many other issues of benefits, other things, that have to be addressed. As with all cases, there are always reasons why not to do them. The approach we'll be bringing is to find the way that we can do them.

I am a strong believer in equal opportunity. I'm a very strong believer in equal opportunity because my career has benefited greatly from the results of giving opportunity to a lot of people who might not otherwise get it in a white-male-dominated government structure. And you will hear a lot from

me over the time ahead in my persuasion that it isn't a societal function, it's an agency function for how we insure we offer the best opportunity to draw on all of the talent this agency has been fortunate to derive.

Now rather than my standing and spewing philosophy at you for another 45 minutes, let me instead turn to questions that you have. There are no questions that are out of bounds. Some of the answers may be.

Who would like to begin? Yes.

MAN: ...Do you see any modification of the present [unintelligible] program [inaudible]?

ADMIRAL INMAN: I'd love to simplify it and cut the documentary requirements to -- as a sort of beginning target to about a quarter of what's now involved. I don't know whether that's going to be achievable.

What we are moving toward, in the very first examination of it, is to try to look at the problems in target or geographical contexts, as opposed to systems. To face up to the great shortfall we've had now for these last several years, when we were struggling under preconceived ceilings, that large new systems could fare fairly well, but there was no way in which to put forth in any organized way the gaps: What were we not doing? Were we falling behind?

And I'm persuaded, at least from my experience prior to coming here, that in looking at things in a target sense and looking at what are you producing, what do you need to produce, where are you falling short in that, that you're a long way ahead in being able at least to examine your gaps.

A lot of this is, you know, a naive wandering into the thicket of dealing with the upper levels of the government. But I am persuaded that the DCI's role must be one of advocacy for quality intelligence in this country and that he must not get into a position of playing another OMB. And I think the place where you really begin that is by focusing on gaps, trying to prioritize what you're adding on various targets, as opposed to drawing away from targets.

The DCI and I will be looking at whether all the investment that is now being made in various staff support structures need to be continued. But I think you will find we're already a very ready audience for the need for additional people in the line structures across the board. And that clearly means the support side of the house, as well as the collection and production sides.

Don't scratch your heads. You're likely to get me to call on you in the process. Yes.

MAN: [Inaudible]

ADMIRAL INMAN: But they're really two different problems. One is differing viewpoints, and the other is the quality of the prose or the exposition of those viewpoints.

It's clear the DCI does want to try to bring out differing views. On the other hand, at least the sense I've gotten from the dialogue, Bruce, is that he does not want to spend an awful lot of time in trying to find the exact right compromise word.

You will all remember that much of his own personal success in his private endeavor has been as an editor as an editor and a writer. And so he has some very cogent views on the best ways to concisely phrase things to convey them to the outside world.

If I have any sort of instant impression from my brief exchanges, it's a preference for conciseness or brevity at least in summarizing, and then more detailed examination thereafter, or as backup.

But he is keen to let people have their views expressed.

From having spent too much of my last seven years sitting around the UCIV-INFID (?) table, I know some of the frustration that a lot of you experience in trying to understand what that other view is. And so it's very fair game to insist that it at least be spelled out in language that all of us can understand.

No, we won't spend a lot of time trying to polish up their prose. But there will be a genuine willingness to let documents flow upward which clearly expound different views, if those are held, and then let people defend them themselves.

MAN: Is it reasonable at this point in the game to ask what you do want to do [unintelligible]?

ADMIRAL INMAN: I have spent these last seven years in Washington in the crucible in a number of cases. I have looked at the drawdowns in manpower of a decade. I have shared the frustration with the time delays for extra signatures or for legal interpretations. But I'm persuaded that manpower is a far greater restriction on our ability to accomplish our mission than restrictions prescribed in 12036.

And as I look out at the '80s and all the tough problems that we're going to have to deal with, I'm persuaded that we're

going to have to have a community that is very substantially larger than it is now. I'm persuaded that we're going to have to have a CIA that is substantially larger than it is now. I'm persuaded, in the early part of that decade, before we have the infrastructure to recruit, to train, to deploy those people, that we're going to need to tap all the support in the U.S. that we can find, in academic institutions, in institutes, a whole range of support.

I am persuaded that organizational efforts to split up the agency into several agencies is absolutely the wrong way to go. It would compete for the manpower you need to put on productive uses.

All of that leads me to conclude that we're going to urgently need all the public support, all the congressional support we can get for additional resources and for additional support for a lot of things we're going to have to do overseas, including covert action. That's going to be a little tough to build support for.

In that light, I do not believe the incremental additional contribution to the FBI's activity in the domestic scene is worth the cost that it would give us in getting the support to do the first-priority events. It is -- it is not a civil-libertarian approach to the problem. It's a pragmatist approach to where are our greatest needs, where are the constituencies where we have to have support to do it, and how are we most likely to do that fast.

I would hope that we will be successful this year in identities legislation. I would hope we will be successful this year in some relief from the Freedom of Information Act, for all of its critical impact on our third-party relationships, aside from the manpower misuse.

Again, I am persuaded that we are likely to erode those necessary 20 or 30 votes to get that legislation through in pushing for relief of other things which are either an irritant or which would be an additive job to something that the FBI is charged to do.

That's a long-winded answer, but at least that may touch off some additional questions.

MAN: [Inaudible]...some of our energy assessments have become a source of considerable comment.

ADMIRAL INMAN: Here is one, again, where my -- the views I bring now may change with experience. But I never like to miss the opportunity to express a view, whether I have any experience or not.

I am not a great admirer of the rush to produce-the-unclassified vogue. We have a government constituency. They are our first constituency. We need to work very hard to produce the best-quality product we can for them. It's nice to do that at the lowest level of classification that we can. But whether then taking the time to get a lot of things on down to the unclassified level for an entirely different audience is really worth doing is something I will have to be persuaded.

I bring the perception to the problem that we would be far better served by devoting the additional production assets to a lot of other things we're not now able to do. That may change when I am wiser, but at least it's where I begin this problem.

Yes -- as you will gather, I'm having a little trouble in sort of getting oriented to all of the rest of these things in peripheral vision. So don't hesitate to speak up if I'm missing seeing you.

MAN: Admiral, over the course of the next year or so, what do you think are some of the things that could be done here to improve the quality [inaudible]?

ADMIRAL INMAN: Since I didn't let ignorance keep me from answering the last one, I would try to pursue that one.

The -- I bring to this problem a visceral instinct that looking at matters in a geographical context is better than looking at them in a functional context, and that one is more likely, if one concentrates one's capabilities across a geographical area, to see what's going on in its totality.

There are tough things in managing in that arena. The biggest problem is to not let all the assets get drawn up in doing the current intelligence problems; and how in that mechanism you protect the look at the future, instead of the present, is a tough one to come to grips with.

I believe the first priority is indeed manpower, manpower that will let you look at problems at greater depth.

I wish I had a better understanding now of the internal assignment and promotion system. In a few months I will.

I bring to the problem a persuasion that you ought to be able to hire people to be experts on a given country or series of countries and languages, and to be able to progress a very substantial distance up a promotion ladder, essentially a two-track system. Some people are very skillful managers. Others are simply much better managers of their own mind and the material that they deal with.

The degree that you can protect those people who have that great personal interest and desire to know more and to understand more about a given target and to project them up to where they have a sense of personal accomplishment from the promotion level they achieve I bring as a sense of one of the most important things you can do in getting at the question of broader perceptions and looking off into the future.

Now, the reason I hesitate a little bit about a lot of this is that the DCI may be bringing a whole different perspective to this problem. And this is one of the many areas where a DDCI who has enjoyed running things is finding some necessity to hang back a little and to give the leader a chance to express his views and to lay out his own approaches to the problems, and then to seek ways to support them.

Here is one where it's really what I had in mind in the comment at the early part about organization and ideas of how to use people. Here's where we really need to draw on the collective experience and talent here.

There probably aren't many approaches that haven't been tried in this agency over the time since 1947. I doubt if we're likely to invent many new things that haven't been tried. But if I'm right that we're going to be going into a time of some improvement in our manpower posture, some improvement in hardware to support the operation, then the key becomes how can we best invest the first part of it for early returns, looking for, over the longer range, how we support across the whole broad structure of the agency.

MAN: You said at the beginning that there's really only one Director. But maybe you could clarify how your role vis-a-vis the Director's role will be working out in the future.

ADMIRAL INMAN: When Mr. Casey was embarked on his arm-twisting evolution to bring me here, I offered up a number of other people that I thought had better credentials, at least comparable credentials. And the response was he was really seeking balance to the background that he brings to the problem itself; and that balance was captured, to a great extent in my experience in the technical collection side of the house and in my experience in dealing with the Congress in trying to get resources. And in his early exposition of concentration of effort, my recollection of that conversation is his priority that he wanted us to share was on trying to improve the overall quality of the analytical output of the community, but primarily of the agency; and that he would -- that he brought a great deal of personal expertise himself to the clandestine collection and covert action sides of the house, and that he would expect me to spend a great deal of my time in working the community problems, the resource problems, the congressional accounts, the day-to-day management

problems of the agency.

When I'm not also trying to be the Director of NSA, that may be a little easier to try to undertake. My sense is that, on balance the agency has done extraordinarily well in carrying, thus far, through a period of itinerant leadership. There have been a few goofs. One would like to have done several things differently. But on balance, the record is very good indeed. And I hope you can sustain it as that through the next few months, until we're sort of really settled in.

MAN: [Inaudible]

ADMIRAL INMAN: I'm talking about, in my view covering many more topics in more depth than we now have the capability to do. But I'm also talking about doing better, better in the sense of trying to focus on a wide range of users, to try to not shape the result, but shape the volume and the precision of what we provide to their immediate needs.

When you're drawn down 22 percent across the board in strength, one of the first things you automatically do is to begin to look how can you reduce the overall burden of producing and tailoring. And you're led automatically to the only reasonable solution is to try to go one where you make something you're going to produce usable to as wide a range as possible. But the end result of that is that usually each of those who receives it is a little dissatisfied with what he gets.

And I am persuaded, if we are to draw from the users a perception that they are getting a better-quality product, a lot of that is going to be tailoring for the individual users to whom it's going to go. And that translates into manpower. There's no other way that I know to deal with it.

MAN: [Inaudible]

ADMIRAL INMAN: I wondered when we would get around to the question of politicized answers, since it's a fairly popular one that I've heard my whole working life in the intelligence community.

I have -- from what I have heard -- and I've been only to a few of the upper-level councils. I have not heard anyone saying, "Come up with the right answer." What I have heard is, "Tell me exactly what it is you know." And I don't think one ought to be excessively defensive about the judgment one draws or has drawn in the past. They really want to know, "What is the evidence on which you base those judgments?" And so the degree to one -- that one goes back and says, "This body of activity is seen and this body of activity is seen and this body of activity is seen, and we don't have any evidence that connects

them. It may be there and we have not been able to find it. But thus far, in what we have been able to examine, this is the compilation of what we know about the support for it." And I believe that answer will be very fully accepted.

It is giving judgments without any understanding of what that evidence is, or in presenting it in a way where it isn't clear what is evidence and what is judgment, that causes the uncertainty

I have spent more of my intelligence career as an analyst than any other function. I've probably complained at least as much as anyone who is here over changes to my deathless prose by editors, by others along the way who were trying to draw out exactly what it was I was trying to present. It's been extraordinarily rare that I have ever confronted someone actually wanting me to alter my judgments for reasons of supporting policy decisions. But I have encountered it. And I have flatly, unequivocally always refused to tolerate it. And I've found that didn't do too badly by me in a career.

[Laughter]

ADMIRAL INMAN: And I highly recommend it to you. Don't confuse pressure for you to be very precise about what you know and don't know with efforts to get you to say something you do not know, or to say something you don't support. In the first one, I won't have much pity for you. In the last one, I'm ready to stand up and fight.

I would simply make one more passing reference to a lot of the weekend publicity.

The DCI came back only a little concerned that I was going to be poised on the front steps with my tennis shoes on, waiting to flee the scene. I won't be the least reluctant to leave on matters of principle. And I would hope that that's not the problem that will come to either of us in the process over the time.

But don't be reluctant -- don't be overly quick to presume that's what's driving when people come back. And if they are a little confused as to what is judgment, what is fact we'll always have to live with that.

MAN: [Inaudible]

ADMIRAL INMAN: Well, one of the perceptions that I probably should have outlined at the beginning -- that you can work at correcting but you should understand that I bring it to the problem -- is that from time to time more energy has been expended on trying to establish a CIA place in the sun than on

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the outcome that comes out of the product. Part of the efforts to sort of simplify who's responsible for community coordination of functions as opposed to the actual production of CIA events itself is sort of clear the decks for very heavy pressure for and very strong support to the principle that CIA is not, as an institution first among equals, but that it is absolutely the best, and that we put the focus on that process.

And that means a lot of things inside. That goes back to the earlier comments about that you work to an internal audience, not an external audience.

I came to this auditorium a few months ago for a ceremony for the community, and there was a very unfortunate headline in The Star that indicated an intent to change the leadership of the community. And as some of us came in and took seats down toward the front, a couple of senior citizens of CIA came in at the back, saw some of us from NSA down here, and made the comment, in the hearing of one of our young ladies who was there "Well, I'll bet they're gloating."

Gloating was the last possible sentiment to come around at that situation. But that was really, to some substantial degree the basis of my perception that there is too much worry about what outsiders think, as opposed to what do we think ourselves about us and what pride do we have in what we're doing and how good we are. And my interest is in insuring that that pride is there, that one's pretty comfortable, that you don't have to go boost it; it is the best effort that this country can get.

Did that scare away any further questions?

Well, maybe we should make a compromise with both flexible time and a flexible experiment for the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence to communicate with this agency in a very broad sense.

I feel very privileged to be with you. And I hope you have some sense of the same in return a couple of years down the way.

Thank you very much.